



**HUDSON RIVER PCBs
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROJECT**

*An Independent Evaluation of Best Practices
for Involving Stakeholders in Remedial Design and Remedial Action*

**STAGE I REPORT
Summary of Comments Heard
During Stage I Interviews**

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Acknowledgements

We experienced wonderful hospitality up and down the Hudson River as we met with interviewees. We sincerely appreciate the time each person took to meet with us and to share their thoughts, feelings, concerns and hopes for the public participation process. It is only through the insights and work of many stakeholders that public participation is truly meaningful. The ultimate Community Involvement Plan will benefit tremendously from the work done by interviewees in these initial interviews.

We hope this report will provide a useful basis for further stakeholder discussions regarding the nature and extent of public participation in the Hudson River PCB Project. The ideas and concerns documented in this report will also provide a foundation that will support the final recommendations presented to EPA by the MNG Team.

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated.

— *The MNG Team*



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Executive Summary

This report portrays the views of more than 144 Hudson Valley community members who were interviewed regarding how the public should be meaningfully involved in the design and implementation of the Hudson River PCBs dredging project. The interviews were conducted by a neutral team of public participation professionals, contracted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The interviewees identified a wide range of anticipated impacts from the dredging project, expectations for public participation as the design and implementation of the project moves forward, and opinions concerning past involvement of the public. These viewpoints will become the focus of further discussions by stakeholders and will provide a foundation for recommendations that will be developed by the team of facilitators in the near future. This report also identifies some common elements of effective public participation that have emerged from the interviews and will form the foundation for additional stakeholder dialog.

Potential Impacts of Concern

Interviewees anticipate significant impacts will result from this project, particularly along the forty-mile stretch of the river in which dredging will occur. Interviewees expressed concern over how these impacts might effect their communities, their livelihoods, and their health. Key issues identified by interviewees are identified below.

- Throughout the project area, stakeholders are concerned about potential negative effects to human health. These effects could stem from the consumption of fish who have been exposed to high concentrations of PCBs and other resuspended contaminants, or from increased human exposure to contaminants during dredging, transport, processing, and disposal of sediments.
- In upriver communities, where dredging activity will be concentrated, stakeholders are very concerned about short-term and long-term economic impacts to agriculture, other businesses, property owners, and the community as a whole.
- Upriver communities are also concerned about how dredging operations and the treatment and transport of sediments will affect their quality of life during implementation of the project. Quality of life concerns include noise, light, odor, and traffic congestion.

Expectations for Future Involvement

A key aspect of this report is public expectations regarding future public participation as the Hudson River PCBs dredging project moves forward. Topics covered by the interviews include participation needs, information needs, interests that should be involved, issues on which participation is desired, and potential obstacles to successful participation. Key issues identified by interviewees are identified below.

- There is a pressing need throughout the project area for basic information regarding the scope of the project and how decisions will be made as the project moves forward.
- The communities affected by the project desire a comprehensive, proactive, and consistent program to provide them with up-to-date, understandable information throughout the design and implementation of the project. Stakeholders may need assistance to better utilize technical information.
- Stakeholders desired a broad range of opportunities to provide input and discuss issues with EPA and other stakeholders. These opportunities include small group and one-on-one dialogue, in addition to larger public meetings.
- There are divergent views among stakeholders regarding the extent to which some interests should be involved in decision-making for the project, but interviewees from throughout the project area believed that participation should be concentrated in upriver communities.
- There is a wide range of issues on which stakeholders desire input. Throughout the project area, interviewees were concerned about the potential resuspension of contaminants. Upriver communities were also concerned with the design and operation of dredging activities, the transport of sediments, the location and operation of sediment processing facilities, and the location of final disposal sites.
- There is a large number of potential obstacles to successful participation on this project. These include the lack of available information, the history of mistrust among interests, and the approach taken by EPA. Stakeholders also expressed concerns that some interests would use a public participation process to delay or derail the dredging project.

Stakeholder Views of Past Involvement

The views of stakeholders regarding future involvement on this project stem from their experience with the EPA's public participation efforts during the development of the Record of Decision. Key issues identified by interviewees are identified below.

- Many concerns were expressed regarding the flow of information from EPA to the public. Interviewees also questioned the objectivity of information provided by all sources.
- There were mixed reactions to the public hearings that were held, but many interviewees indicated that interactions were not productive and were often antagonistic.
- There were many concerns expressed regarding the ineffective implementation of the Community Interaction Plan.
- The technical peer review process received mixed reviews. Ultimately, this review process probably did little to change the viewpoints among those who supported or opposed dredging the river.
- While some interviewees were satisfied with EPA's overall performance, others had serious concerns regarding the agency's commitment to meaningful public participation.

Common Elements of Effective Public Participation

Out of the many questions, concerns, opinions, and reactions expressed by the interviewees, the team identified some common principles that stakeholders would like to see included in the community involvement process for the Hudson River PCBs dredging project.

1. The process must be transparent—all aspects of decision-making for the project should be visible and understandable to all stakeholders.
2. The process must be meaningful—involvement must focus attention on tasks and issues where public input will have a real influence on decisions.
3. The process must be responsive to public input and questions. Members of the public must feel that EPA values their input.
4. The process must be flexible to respond to changing conditions and situations.
5. Participation must be appropriate to the decisions being made so the outcomes will be viewed as legitimate.
6. Participants must have clear roles and responsibilities, with regular feedback from EPA that acknowledges the public's input.
7. Participation must be adequately supported with accurate and timely information.

While many interviewees expressed interest in some or all of these ideals, these principles have not been considered or validated by Hudson River stakeholders in total. It is hoped that these principles will form the foundation of additional stakeholder dialog and will lead to the development of an effective basis for future steps in devising the community involvement plan for the Hudson River PCBs dredging project.



1.0 Introduction

In February 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its decision to dredge a 40-mile segment of the Hudson River that was contaminated with PCBs from past industrial operations in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. Later that spring, EPA contracted with Marasco Newton Group (MNG) of Arlington, Virginia, (hereafter, the MNG Team) to assemble a team of experienced senior public participation professionals to identify preferred and appropriate means of conducting rigorous and meaningful community involvement during the design and implementation of the Hudson River PCBs dredging project.

The MNG Team interviewed a broad spectrum of stakeholders to get an understanding of their issues and concerns about the project and to identify important considerations for developing effective public information and a rigorous and meaningful public participation program. (Additional information on the interview process appears in Appendix A.)

A public participation process typically involves participants in the design of the process itself. For the purposes of this project, stakeholders are defined as anyone who feels he or she has an interest in the remediation of the Hudson River.

1.1 Report Purpose

This report documents the results of interviews with 144 people to date living in the upper and lower Hudson River Valley who are interested in the Hudson River PCBs dredging Project. The purpose of the interviews was to understand what stakeholders felt about their involvement in the EPA decision process to date and to identify their overall needs and desires for public participation about the Hudson River PCBs Dredging Project in the future.

This report is intended to provide a useful basis for further stakeholder discussions regarding the nature and extent of public participation in the Hudson River PCB Project. The ideas and concerns documented in this report also will provide a foundation of evidence that will support the final recommendations presented to EPA by the MNG Team.

In discussing the purpose of this report, however, it is also important to state what it does not do. This report is not a legal document, legal discovery, finding of fact, technical report, nor an exhaustive study of all those individuals and organizations with a stake in the Hudson River PCB dredging. This report does not provide statistical evidence of what issues were most or least important to various stakeholder groups, nor does it seek to enforce or distinguish among groups who differ in their opinions about whether or not dredging is an appropriate response to the PCBs in the Hudson River. It does not place greater value on one perspective over other perspectives, judge the correctness of any opinions, or seek to dispel

any particular beliefs. It does not seek to determine who is a "real" stakeholder. This report is not an indictment of the past behavior of any stakeholder or agency.

The authors recognize that the Hudson River touches many lives. While the 144 individuals interviewed represent a broad range of interests, there are other important stakeholders who have different interests, concerns, and viewpoints who were not interviewed. Thus, the report is limited by the information gathered in the interviews and the organization of that information by the MNG Team. All errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the MNG Team.

1.2 Report Structure

The comments, suggestions, and opinions of interviewees are arranged broadly under substantive categories and some common themes voiced by the stakeholders. These categories are organized as follows:

Potential Impacts of Concern. This section identifies the many personal and community level concerns of the interviewees that are important to consider in all planning and implementation activities.

Expectations of EPA Public Participation. This section presents the many ideas and expectations identified by interviewees with regard to EPA's future public participation activities.

Feedback on Past EPA Public Participation. This section identifies interviewees likes and dislikes of previous EPA public participation efforts to serve as a guide to future efforts.

Common Elements for Effective Public Participation. In this section, the authors seek to identify the many common desires heard from interviewees with regard to the important elements of future EPA public participation. These common themes will serve as the starting point for additional stakeholder interaction into the design of EPA's Community Involvement Plan.

The interview team has sought to reflect interviewees' comments accurately and respectfully. Comments as reported are generally not exact quotes, but paraphrases of issues and concerns expressed by interviewees. Each comment may reflect only one person's view or the views expressed by many individuals in the interviews, and this distinction is generally noted. Stakeholders often held opposing opinions, and these are reported without any attempt at reconciliation between the two. To respect the privacy of interviewees, no comments are attributed to specific individuals. In some instances, specific unattributed quotes are identified using quotation marks to exemplify a point.

It should be noted that the members of the MNG Team are not advocates for any particular outcome or interest. Rather, the MNG Team strives to conduct its work in a fair, deliberate, and non-partisan fashion and to be free from favoritism or bias. While the MNG Team has tried to organize comments, suggestions, and opinions according to some common themes, this report is not intended to be an analysis of the interviews or a presentation of recommendations or conclusions. Recommendations on public participation will be developed in subsequent stages of the planning process, and on the basis of further stakeholder involvement.

All interviewees will be provided the opportunity to review this report and add any issues or concerns they feel were not fully captured herein. These additional comments will be captured by the authors and organized into an addendum to this report.

2.0 Potential Impacts of Concern

Interviewees described a wide range of impacts that they anticipate from the dredging project, both positive and negative. Almost all interviewees share a common goal—a healthy and beneficial river. Specific issues related to this goal are numerous. They include positive and negative impacts on commerce, economic development, recreation, river navigation, agriculture, commercial and sport fishing, tourism, and historic preservation.

While they shared the same overall goal, stakeholders were divided as to whether or not the dredging project will be beneficial or harmful to the achievement of that goal. Many believe that the river's health is continuing to improve without dredging—that the river is cleaning itself—and that the risks associated with dredging do not outweigh the potential benefits. Others believe dredging is the key to the long-term health of the river.

Most interviewees expressed concern about the stigma associated with PCBs in the Hudson, but again are divided in the role that dredging could play in alleviating that stigma. Some believe it will transform the upriver communities and promote long-term growth. Others believe it will bring increased negative attention to the area.

A wide variety of potential impacts were noted by interviewees. Specific comments have been organized by topics below.

2.1 Potential Impacts to Human Health and Quality of Life

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Dredging may eventually allow for the safe consumption of striped bass, whether caught through commercial fishing or sports fishing.
- Resuspension of contaminants could result in higher levels of contaminants in fish, leading to increased health risks for people eating Hudson River fish. Some people in the project area, particularly in low-income and minority communities, regularly consume fish caught in the Hudson River.
- The quality of life for residents upriver will be adversely affected by bright lights, noise, and odor from the dredging operations and sediment de-watering and transfer facility.

- Resuspension will cause potential human health issues not just from PCBs but also from other chemicals that will get stirred up and there may not be adequate monitoring for these other contaminants.
- Water supplies could be adversely affected. Several river communities use the river as a primary source of drinking water or as a drought contingency. Some farmers use the river for irrigation and stock watering. Interviewees feared that increased levels of PCBs and other contaminants in the river could increase human health risks and result in dramatic cost increases for communities that must turn to alternate water supplies.
- Routine seasonal flooding events would deposit resuspended PCBs and other contaminants on the floodplain, creating health risks for people who spend time along the banks of the river.
- Resuspended contaminants could volatilize into the air, posing a greater health risk to nearby communities and users of the river.
- Spills and leaks of contaminated materials at dewatering and transfer facilities may result in increased environmental contamination in the floodplain. PCBs and other contaminants may volatilize into the air when stockpiled at these facilities.
- Spills during transport could result in increased exposure to contaminated materials.
- Concerns were expressed over increased traffic levels and community impacts associated with the transport of backfill material to the Hudson River, or transport of sediments or workers' vehicles, that would create inconveniences in the project area.
- If sediments are transported by truck, heavy traffic may lead to traffic congestion, increased wear on road surfaces, and safety issues.
- If sediments are transported by railcar, the construction of new rail lines and increased rail traffic may adversely affect the community.

2.2 Potential Economic Impacts

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- EPA should emphasize economic impacts of dredging the river.
- Resuspended sediments could impact agriculture. Many farmers use river water to irrigate land in the floodplain and river water routinely submerges agricultural fields during floods. The increased deposition of contaminants in the floodplain could negatively affect the image of their products among consumers.
- Increased levels of contaminants in the river could negatively affect the public's image of the river and the surrounding area, resulting in decreased recreational use of the river and less interest in economic development.
- If sediments are transported by barge, increased barge traffic may create significant delays for recreational and commercial boaters moving through the lock system, create congestion on the river, and increase the risk of boating accidents. These impacts would subsequently discourage recreation and negatively affect businesses along the river that rely on boat traffic.
- The area will suffer from the negative stigma associated with dredging no matter how low the actual resuspension rates are.
- Proximity of facilities could decrease property values.
- Dredging could decrease the levels of contaminants in the river allowing property values to increase.
- The speed and volume of dredging will greatly inconvenience or block river traffic and deprive local businesses of significant income.
- Dredging will result in an economic benefit around the canal channel improve the movement of bulk cargo.
- Dredging will removes one economic impediment to new businesses relocating in the area.
- The stigma of dredging will have extremely negative impacts on the local farming and tourism communities.

- Lights and noise could disturb farm animals, resulting in decreased production. Disturbances could include startling noises and flashes, as well as chronic background noise and light pollution.
- Resuspension will greatly impact agricultural and municipal water supplies, resulting in increased expense and lost business.
- Interviewees disagreed about the potential impacts on commercial fishing. Some said there was never viable commercial fishing in the upper Hudson. Many suggested the difference in time to achieve safe fish levels between dredging and not dredging was negligible.
- There was a great deal of disagreement among interviewees regarding the potential economic benefits of the dredging project itself. The full economic benefits of the project may not be felt locally as over half the project budget is for transportation and disposal. Similarly, many of the jobs may go to government oversight.
- Hosting a de-watering or transfer facility may provide economic advantages, including jobs, increased business for service industries (restaurants, motels, gas stations, etc.), and improvements to docking and railway infrastructure.
- Project-related railway improvements may lead to economic development opportunities.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the economic impacts of the utilization and possible depletion of local sand and gravel sources to be used for the Hudson River backfill which are also utilized for local road building, maintenance and construction activities.

2.3 Potential Impacts on Fish and Other Wildlife

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Dredging and the transport of dredged material may harm or destroy habitat for fish and other wildlife.
- Resuspended sediments also could negatively affect the health of wildlife living in and near the river.



- The dredging will have little long-term impacts on fish. The current situation allows for a very successful "catch and release" fishery for striped bass.
- Resuspended contaminants will find their way into the food chain.

2.4 Potential Impacts on River Navigation

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Environmental dredging should be coordinated with navigational dredging.
- Resuspended sediments could make navigational dredging more difficult and expensive.
- Project-related dredging could lead to improved river passage.
- Project-related river traffic may lead to river congestion and delays at locks.
- Backfill of dredged areas may interfere with navigation of the river.
- The inconvenience may cause many boaters to avoid the area entirely.

2.5 Potential Impacts on Archeological and Historical Resources

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- The dredging project will disturb historical artifacts and archeological sites that currently rest on the riverbed and on islands in the river.
- Artifacts which are recovered during the course of the project should be kept for display in the area.

2.6 Mitigation of Potential Impacts

Specific interviewee suggestions included the following:

- A number of people suggested that EPA could offset the project's negative impacts by developing community enhancements.
- Local communities should benefit from project-related jobs;
- Processing sites should be remediated for recreational and/or industrial use following the project;
- EPA should provide enhancement of local educational programs;
- EPA should provide enhancement of environmental monitoring capacity through watershed monitoring training programs for people along the river;
- EPA should provide environmental tourism by providing opportunities for the public to tour the cleanup project; and
- EPA should contribute to the enhancement of archaeological exhibits.



3.0 Expectations of EPA Public Participation

Interviewees expressed many ideas and concerns regarding public participation for the Hudson River PCBs dredging project. Almost all interviewees stated that it was very important that rigorous and meaningful public participation be implemented. A number of interviewees expressed concerns that EPA's design schedule for remediation will not allow adequate time for the public to provide meaningful input.

Many of the interviewees' expectations relate to the relationship between EPA and the public. (Interviewees were also asked about their experiences in the process leading up to the Record of Decision which are presented in Section 4.0.) While historically the relationship between EPA and the public has been difficult, most of the people who were interviewed applauded EPA for locating its field office in Fort Edward, and they expressed hope that this decision is an indication that EPA is changing the way it responds to community concerns. There was also a widespread attitude among interviewees that they were ready to get involved in the project in a constructive way if rigorous and meaningful public participation could be established.

Expectations for public participation fall into several broad categories: the extent of participation in the process; information needs of the community; input to specific project design issues; EPA interaction with the public; the need for technical and financial assistance; and potential obstacles to effective participation. Specific comments have been organized by those topics below.

3.1 The Extent of Participation

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- A broad range of interests, including women, children, and communities of color, should be represented throughout the project design and implementation phases.
- EPA should seek to balance representation in the process so no one position can control the discussion.
- There was disagreement among the stakeholders about whether or not a public participation process should seek out individuals who were vocal advocates for or against the dredging project. Some interviewees believed that a process could not be legitimate without the full participation of these "usual" interests. Others expressed fear that commitment to past positions and adverse relationships with other stakeholders would interfere with a constructive process.
- EPA should seek out individuals and interest groups who have not been actively engaged in past processes.
- There is a need for the concerns of individuals and groups to be more thoroughly investigated, identified, and articulated.
- Stakeholders from all regions of the project area stated that EPA should focus its public participation efforts upriver. However, others stressed the need for meaningful public participation down-river.
- A few respondents indicated that EPA should limit involvement upriver because they believed that anti-dredging advocates would impair the effectiveness of public participation programs.
- Public participation should focus only on stakeholders who have a direct economic interest in the river.
- EPA's National Contingency Plan draws distinctions for participation by the directly affected community.
- Most stakeholders should be drawn from an "impact zone" of two miles each side of the river in the dredging area.
- The public stakeholders should be consulted on the issues that directly impact the quality of their lives, and discussion of technical issues should be omitted.
- The public should be welcome to participate meaningfully in technical issues.
- Since the Hudson River is an important asset to the United States, participation should be extended to interests beyond the Hudson Valley.
- All committees and meetings should have equal advocates and opponents to dredging represented.
- EPA and other stakeholders should be more sensitive and responsive to geographic differences, particularly the needs of upriver communities.
- EPA must balance the benefits of participation with the expense and time needed to conduct a participation program.



- EPA and other stakeholders in down-river areas need to better respect the intelligence and opinions of upriver community members.
- Some interviewees expressed concerns about GE's ability to participate fairly in light of their extensive advertising campaigns and efforts to stop the project. Others felt that GE and its former employees have been unfairly excluded from decision-making processes.
- A broad range of stakeholder interests were identified by interviewees, including:
 - Pro-dredging groups;
 - Anti-dredging groups;
 - Elected officials (state, county, and local);
 - Town, village, city, county, and state government;
 - Local water commissions;
 - Local business interests;
 - Agriculture;
 - Upriver, mid, and downriver residents;
 - Landowners;
 - Economic development interests;
 - Tourism;
 - Environmental organizations;
 - Human health and medical experts;
 - Drinking water experts;
 - Independent environmental scientists;
 - Independent legal experts;
 - Commercial fishing interests;
 - Sports fishing interests;
 - Recreational boaters;
 - River navigation interests;
 - Minority and low-income communities (i.e., environmental justice interests);
 - Local youth;
 - Labor unions;
 - Religious communities;
 - General Electric; and
 - EPA.

3.2 Information Needs

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- EPA should develop an extensive and proactive information program to ensure people have the information they need to participate in the project.
- EPA should ensure when input is invited on technical decisions, the public understands how input on such decisions by non-technical individuals will be incorporated.

- EPA should provide an environmental impact statement or equivalent to provide documentation of what project environmental impacts were considered and how these impacts were evaluated.
- Interviewees stressed that they need baseline information about the project, including:
 - A project master plan and schedule that states where, when, and how the dredging will be done;
 - Information about the technical aspects of removing and treating the sediment;
 - What aspects of the project have already been determined in the ROD;
 - What decisions have yet to be made;
 - How public input will be considered; and
 - How decisions will ultimately be made.
- Provide information about other communities in which major environmental dredging projects have occurred so that stakeholders know what to expect.

Suggestions from interviewees regarding general principles for information and ways of disseminating information are presented below.

3.2.1 General Principles

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Interviewees want information that is timely, understandable, and accurate.
- Provide substantial amounts of information to stakeholders; err on the side of providing too much information.
- Provide information that is written in plain language and presented in user-friendly formats, rather than lengthy technical reports.
- Provide information through numerous media and locations. "The worst enemy has often been the public's sense of the unknown. It's got to be explained clearly and in multiple ways."
- Work closely with reporters to ensure that news articles are accurate and timely.
- Use local stakeholders to review information before it is released to the public and to ensure the information is adequately presented.

- Issue regular project updates to ensure the public is adequately informed.
- Ensure that elected and other government officials receive project information as soon as it is available so they can answer constituents' questions.
- Work directly with cleanup contractors and workers to ensure they communicate appropriately with the public.
- EPA should follow the public consultation process associated with the National Historic Preservation Act to ensure that cultural materials that are recovered as part of the project stay in the area
- Information including press releases disseminated from EPA should be factual and straight, without "spin."

3.2.2 Information Dissemination

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Provide multiple sources for people to get information and provide input—especially for those who are unable to attend meetings.
- Provide direct information to village, town, city, and county officials, existing interest groups and community leaders to communicate the information directly to their constituencies and members.
- EPA should publish a monthly report on dredging, and this report should include whether or not PCB levels are increasing or decreasing in an easy to understand format.
- Some interviewees want to see EPA continue to hold formal public hearings and public meetings for key decisions, similar to the hearings held prior to the announcement of the Record of Decision. Many others feel those meetings were not an effective form of public participation.
- Write regular question-answer format columns, articles reporting progress updates (like a "score card"), and human interest stories about locals working on the project.
- Purchase advertising space and create inserts in local papers.
- Create models of the project area and the dredging process.
- Provide hands-on examples and demonstrations of equipment, and videos of actual dredging operations.
- Offer people an opportunity to view displays, rather than listen to lectures.
- Develop an "interpretive center" at the Fort Edward field office with regularly updated displays. These displays also could "go on the road."
- Develop clearly written fact sheets.
- Produce project newsletter issued on a regular basis.
- Tailored formats and content of information for specific interest groups.
- Provide interviews for local and weekly newspapers.
- Install displays at local libraries and other areas where people congregate, since some stakeholders may be reluctant to visit an EPA field office.
- Produce spots and interviews for local television and radio stations.
- Provide frequent project updates via email.
- Post documents on the EPA Web site (stakeholders also cautioned that not all residents in the area are comfortable using the Internet).
- Fax information to broad distribution.
- Use direct mail using GE's mailing list and lists from other organizations with an interest in the project.
- Provide informational inserts in utility bills mailed to local residents and businesses.
- Include updates in church and employee newsletters.



- Post information at often-visited locations along the river and at the locks.
- Install viewing platforms in the project area (should be built), so stakeholders and tourists could observe the dredging work first hand.
- Keep a log of actions taken to respond to complaints as a way to demonstrate responsiveness to local concerns.
- EPA should establish an official repository for Superfund Site documents in Columbia County (e.g., the Hudson Area Library or the library of the Columbia-Greene Community College);
- EPA could host a semi-annual conference at which local stakeholders and technical experts could discuss issues associated with the project.
- Visit homes along the shoreline to explain the project's impacts and to answer questions.

3.3 EPA Interaction with the Public

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- EPA needs to establish a more productive relationship with the public that is based on honesty and candor.
- Hold informal availability sessions or public forums at regular intervals or at key decision points where stakeholders can discuss issues and get answers to questions.
- Increase the availability and visibility of EPA representatives throughout the project area.
- EPA should immediately create for an oversight committee which includes funding for someone to represents town interests, and has the authority to stop the project if there are significant problems.
- Provide feedback to the community and explain how input will be used.
- Respond to questions openly, even when the answer may not be popular. "We want simple, straight forward answers."

- Attend municipal board meetings to provide information and to get input from local officials and residents;
- Name an EPA community liaison for each municipality.
- Arrange more frequent visits to the project area by the EPA Administrator and Regional Administrator, and visits by EPA to community fairs and other local events;
- Staff the EPA field office planned for Fort Edward on a daily basis;
- Establish a southern field office;
- Establish EPA offices throughout the project area, or use a van as a mobile office; and
- Reach out directly to young people—especially high school students—who communicate information to their parents and other family members.

3.4 Providing Opportunities for Public Input

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Provide meaningful opportunities for public input during the remediation design phase;
- Include one-on-one meetings with EPA technical staff including EPA technical contractors;
- Increase opportunities for the face-to-face exchange of information through one-on-one and small group meetings. "Come in, sit down, and talk with us."
- Provide opportunities to engage in real dialogue on technical issues;
- Provide the public with notice to weigh in on major decisions that will impact communities before the final decision is made.
- EPA should establish a fair process for handling complaints from the community regarding dredging, and provide contact information to the public.
- Establish a toll-free telephone number for the project;

- Form one advisory committee not several, which might include local officials, stakeholders with technical expertise, and project team personnel;
- Clearly articulate relationships with other on-going Advisory committees including Governor's Task Force and other government groups;
- Distribute disposable cameras to stakeholders so they could document impacts and other concerns;
- Get public comments on a frequent basis;
- Use experienced, neutral, third party facilitators or communicators, who are familiar with the project, to run the process. Facilitation should not be done by in-house EPA staff;
- Allocate hearing agenda time to representatives of specific interests to ensure that a variety of perspectives are heard;
- Use comment cards for stakeholders who are uncomfortable speaking in larger groups; and
- Combine meetings with tours of the project site.

3.5 Public Input To Specific Project Design Issues

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- The public needs more information about design issues.
- A master plan should be developed with public input. This plan should show how each step of the remediation process will be carried out. "One would not build a house without first preparing an architectural plan showing where all the plumbing and electricity will go. The same principle should apply in this case."
- EPA still needs to justify many of the decisions that were included in the Record of Decision for the project. Closure on these issues are needed before stakeholders can move on.
- The potential for resuspension of buried contaminants in the river concerns stakeholders of almost every interest, throughout the project area. The setting of performance standards with

regard to resuspension rates and how those performance standards will be monitored and enforced are critical.

- EPA's assumptions for resuspension rates are unrealistically low, and are below what has ever been achieved. Much work has to be done to prove that such rates are possible.
- Contingency, communication, and emergency response plans should be developed to address dramatic increases in contaminants suspended in the river.
- Hydropower generators and water plant operators want information regarding the effects of resuspended contaminants on their existing and proposed facilities.
- The public needs to be involved in where and how proposed sediment de-watering and transfer facilities will be located.
- The facilities could be sited on viable agricultural land, and there is opposition to the loss of farmland in the Hudson River valley.
- Communities in which facilities are sited may want to negotiate "host agreements" with EPA, which provide concrete benefits to the community to mitigate the negative impacts anticipated from the operation of a facility.
- The public needs to be involved in design aspects of the sediment de-watering and transfer facilities that will impact those living and working nearby.
- The public needs to be involved in design aspects of all transportation activities that will impact those living and working nearby such as mode, routing, and timing.
- Stakeholders should have a role in ensuring that dredged sediments are disposed of in an appropriate and safe manner. A number of interviewees fear that EPA will not be able to identify a final disposal site for dredged materials outside the project area; thus a landfill in the upper Hudson River Valley will be used for disposal or the de-watering and transfer facilities will become de-facto disposal sites. Assurances must be in place that a final disposal facility exists before dredging begins.



- Determining who provides input on the types of dredging equipment available for use on this project;
- The public should have input to analyzing quality of life impacts;
- EPA should review the efficiency of equipment with respect to fossil fuel consumption and air emissions of dredging equipment.
- EPA should conduct field testing must be done at full speed to assess the impacts of the dredging at the rates proposed.
- The public should have input to locations in which backfill may be deposited.
- The public should have input to possible interference with river navigation.
- The public should have input to the source of backfill material, particularly if the source is located in the Hudson River valley.
- The public should have input to traffic impacts associated with backfill transport.
- Project contractors should use local labor.
- EPA should provide an emergency response program;
- EPA should develop project labor agreements with local unions.
- EPA should not use labor agreements, because they might exclude minority workers who are not able to get union cards.

3.6 Technical and Financial Assistance

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Many interviewees believed that more technical assistance was needed to make technical information understandable to lay people.
- Make more than one Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) available for this project. Multiple grants might be made throughout the project area;

- Provide an organizational chart to clearly explain the relationship and interaction of various players.
- Hire experts to make technical information understandable to the public;
- EPA should provide objective, explicit, quantifiable and enforceable performance and safety standards;
- Create a training program to assist local experts and residents to obtain jobs related to the project;
- Seek out and involve local residents with technical expertise in decision making for the project;
- Do not invest a tremendous amount of time educating the public on technical issues;
- Provide financial assistance to groups who need assistance to participate fully in the project; and
- Develop a travel guide to the upriver section of the project area, to facilitate travel by down-river stakeholders to the area.
- EPA should be upfront with its' authority to conduct closed door sessions regarding sampling, project design, and the companies who will perform the project sampling.

3.7 Potential Obstacles to Effective Participation

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Credible information regarding the project is not available. Stakeholders need baseline information regarding where, when and how the dredging will occur;
- There is a history of mistrust and anger regarding this project.
- Some stakeholders may be reluctant to work constructively and abandon prior positions on the dredging issue.
- EPA has less credibility because the Agency operates within a political environment that is susceptible to manipulation by whatever agenda is currently in vogue in Washington, DC.



- EPA may be dismissive of some interests or issues they believe were addressed during the original decision.
- EPA's 3-year design timeframe may shortchange technical accuracy and public input. "The project schedule is arbitrary and unreasonable."
- Past behavior of EPA staff has been perceived as negative. Examples were cited of senior EPA personnel turning their backs on speakers at public meetings and technical staff refusing to meet with stakeholders and being inattentive in meetings.
- Some stakeholders may use the public participation process to delay the dredging of the river or to serve their individual interests. This is a particular concern with respect to setting realistic performance standards—especially for resuspension rates.
- It may be difficult to maintain a consistent level of interest for the duration of the project. "Many people are burned out, and no longer pay attention to project developments." "At some level, everyone is fatigued and just wants to get on with it."
- The belief that public input will not affect EPA decisions.
- "EPA was only fulfilling its legal obligation to involve the public."
- Technical, process-oriented jargon may discourage people from participating. One interviewee noted: "Be careful about jargon – the terms 'consensus' and 'stakeholders' are worn out up here."
- Some groups have limited resources for traveling, attending meetings, and reviewing materials.
- EPA has committed to setting performance standards early in the design process. Setting these standards may be difficult before the final design is complete.
- The role of state and county task forces has not been clearly defined.
- Decisions regarding the Superfund program made at EPA headquarters and by the U.S. Congress may have significant impacts on the Hudson River PCB project.
- The project schedule may be rushed and result in mistakes, which perpetuate mistrust among stakeholders.



4.0 Feedback on the Public Participation that Preceded the Record of Decision

To better understand the stakeholders' perspectives towards public participation and the Hudson River remediation project, the MNG Team asked people to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the public participation that preceded the Record of Decision. Interviewees provided their thoughts regarding the availability of information, the public hearings, the Community Interaction Plan structure and process, the peer review process, and the overall interaction of EPA with the public.

4.1 Information

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- EPA did not go far enough to reach stakeholders with its information or match the intensity of the anti-dredging campaign.
- There was not enough detailed information available regarding the project.
- Information available regarding the dredging project, from all sources, was mostly intended to persuade stakeholders towards a position. One stakeholder characterized the available information as "inflammatory rhetoric."
- Information from EPA was selected to promote its desired outcome. "They knew what they wanted to do, then found the data to justify it."
- The information developed by EPA was of a high quality.
- EPA relied heavily on environmental advocacy organizations to provide its information to the public.
- The GE advertising campaign was very effective in promoting an anti-dredging position. Advertising skewed public understanding of the project, and provided "misinformation."
- Early in the EPA-led reassessment, there was a lull in information provided to the communities. This lack of communication by EPA damaged the agency's credibility within the community.
- GE data should have been made more available to the public in order to allow comparisons to EPA data.

- Some interests had greater access to EPA information than others. Some people established contacts with EPA staff and accessed information about the project directly through staff members.

4.2 Public Hearings

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- The hearings were "shouting matches in which no one listened because everyone knew what everyone was going to say," and that they consisted of "grandstanding and head butting." "The meetings were a waste of time."
- The meetings were like a "theatre" or a "circus." Some stakeholders stated that others manipulated the process, which resulted in ineffective meetings.
- The hearings provided ample opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and voice their concerns regarding the project. There were an adequate number of hearings spread throughout the community.
- EPA did a good job of listening to the comments that were provided at hearings.
- People were uncomfortable voicing their views in hearing settings that felt hostile.
- The meeting locations were inconvenient.
- Meetings were scheduled at inconvenient times for working people.
- There was not sufficient notice of meetings.
- It was difficult for the public to provide meaningful comments at the hearings, because they were not well informed about the project.
- EPA's response to stakeholder comments was inadequate and many questions went unanswered.
- EPA representatives were arrogant and demeaning, damaging the credibility of the agency.
- The technical experts that represented EPA at the hearings lacked effective communication skills.



- Upriver interviewees were angry that there were not many hearings held in upriver communities. "It was like pulling teeth to get EPA to come north of Albany."
- Some stated that holding a hearing in New Jersey was appropriate; others did not.

4.3 Community Interaction Plan Structure and Process

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Although the Community Interaction Plan (CIP) had promise, it was not implemented well.
- The CIP liaison committee structure was overly complicated.
- EPA did not recognize the commitment of liaison committee members, as evidenced by the fact that liaison members comments did not carry more weight than comments from the general public.
- Liaison committees met less frequently during periods of key decision-making when their input should have mattered most.
- Liaison committee members received technical information from EPA that they did not understand. The liaison committee members were not adequately informed regarding technical aspects of the project.
- Liaison committee members did not adequately communicate with their constituents.
- The committees wasted time discussing issues that the community could not influence.
- EPA had a difficulty providing information and conducting the meetings at the same time because there was not enough administrative support at meetings.
- EPA did not document meetings in a user-friendly way.

4.4 Technical Peer Review Process

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- Many interviewees are not familiar with the peer review process.
- EPA did not adequately publicize the peer review.
- The peer review process was very thorough and provided opportunities for different viewpoints to be considered.
- The peer review was biased in favor of EPA's desired outcome. "You can always find experts who agree with your position."
- The EPA report did not honestly represent the peer review panels' criticisms. "EPA blew off the concerns raised during the review."
- EPA relied on their consultants, who performed the original technical work, to respond to technical concerns.
- "We were disappointed that the peer review process was limited to assessing the reliability of the data, and not EPA's conclusions."
- The peer review process probably did not change any viewpoints among those who opposed the dredging project.

4.5 EPA's Interaction with the Public

Specific interviewee comments included the following:

- EPA went out of its way to involve the public and the agency had performed well in a difficult situation.
- EPA was described as "sneaky" and dishonest, and the public participation process was described as "window dressing" and a "sham."
- EPA's credibility was damaged by early mistakes, such as surveying locally for disposal sites and not notifying the public before it performed sampling work in the project area.



5.0 Common Elements of Effective Public Participation

Out of the many questions, concerns, opinions, and reactions expressed by the interviewees, the MNG Team identified several common elements that stakeholders would like to see included in the community involvement process for the Hudson River Remediation Project. These have yet to be validated by the stakeholders, but the initial interviews would suggest that stakeholders will seek the following:

1. The process must be **transparent**.

- All aspects of decision-making for the project should be visible and understandable to all stakeholders.
- Transparency is the key to a successful public participation program for the Hudson River PCB Project.
- Transparency means that the public can easily obtain information about the projects decision-making process.
- Providing adequate information alleviates perceptions that aspects of the project are being concealed.

2. The process must be **meaningful**.

- Involvement must focus attention on tasks and issues where public input will have a tangible influence on decisions to be made.
- EPA often did not identify key issues until it was too late. It often appeared that decisions were already made and that EPA was a proponent for a specific outcome rather than an objective decision-maker.
- The process must show results.
- EPA must follow through on commitments made and decisions reached.
- There is a high level of mistrust between stakeholders and EPA based, in part, on the rancor that dominated past public participation efforts.
- Participants must have a clear roles and concerns.
- A collaborative process can promote healing in the community and restore credibility to EPA.

3. The process must be **responsive**.

- Participation must involve structures (committees, work groups, advisory councils) that support community involvement without being too cumbersome.
- The process must provide feedback to stakeholders concerning how input was considered and how it influenced the decisions that were made.

4. The process must be **flexible**.

- The process should include a wide variety of approaches and strategies for involvement.
- EPA should evaluate its participation efforts throughout the project and revise its approaches as needed.

5. Participation must be **appropriate** to the decisions being made.

- Outcomes will be seen as legitimate only if there is sufficiently broad participation.
- Interviewees differ about how broad the participation should be; some are concerned that being too inclusive may impede progress.

6. Participants must have **clear roles and responsibilities**.

- It must be clear what issues are included in the public participation process and which are not.
- Contributions must be acknowledged. Feedback from EPA is especially important. "We want EPA to demonstrate willingness to consider public comments, respect community concerns, and incorporate our comments to the extent possible."

7. Participation must be **adequately supported**, especially with **key information**.

- Participants need to be informed in a timely fashion about issues, meetings, and decisions so they can prepare themselves to participate in a meaningful way.
- Participants need sufficient technical information (written in plain English) and provided early enough that participants can assimilate it and use it in the public involvement process.





APPENDIX A

Interview Process

Appendix A: The Interview Process

This interview process was developed and implemented by a team of neutral public participation professionals, assembled by Marasco Newton Group under a contract with EPA, to get a better understanding of the project and to assess the current thinking of community members.

Team members met informally with approximately a dozen individuals from a variety of interests in the project area, to discuss their experience with public participation processes during the Hudson River reassessment and their expectations for participation during the design and implementation of the dredging project. An interview guide was developed based on these informal discussions.

The interview guide consisted of 24 questions divided into six sections: past participation; knowledge of the project; information sources; perceived impacts; public participation; and "other." Many of the questions included potential follow-up questions. All team members that would conduct interviews attended a one-day training session to discuss the interview guide and receive background information on the project.

Interviewees were recruited in three ways. EPA provided the team with a list of potential interviewees. These individuals were sent a letter and information sheet, and then contacted to schedule an interview. A press release, which included a toll-free telephone number, was used to invite participation in the interview process. It was sent to media in the project area and posted on the Internet. Finally, interviewees were asked to suggest other stakeholders that should be interviewed for the project.

Each person on the list was called to ask if they would be interested in being interviewed and, if so, to schedule a time to conduct that interview. Interviews were conducted in one-on-one and small group settings in May and early June 2002. In addition to these personal invitations, a hotline was set up so that other members of the affected communities could call to arrange an interview even if they were not part of the initial group identified.

Most interviews were conducted in the project area, at a location selected by the interviewee (generally his or her home or office). Interviews typically lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Some interviews were conducted in small groups, with multiple interviewees from the same organization or interest. A few interviews were conducted by telephone, when it was not possible to schedule a face-to-face appointment.

Interview notes were typed by the interviewer and shared with the whole team. This report was assembled by several team members and shared with the whole team for review and comment. The report will be sent to all interviewees and their comments will be compiled and included as an addendum to the report.





APPENDIX B

Interviewees

Name**Affiliation**

Dave Adams	Saratoga County Environmental Management Council
Dan Ahouse	Office of Representative Maurice Hinchey
Nancy Alden	Resident
Philip Allen	Glens Falls Building Trades
Cindy Allen	Old Saratoga/New Schuylerville
Randy Alstadt	Poughkeepsie Water Treatment Facility
Andrea Auston	Resident
Chris Ballantyne	Sierra Club
Kathleen Bartholomay	Resident
Wayne Bayer	Bureau of Hazardous Site Control, Division of Environmental Remediation
Gerald Beckmann	Beckmann Engineering
Mark Behan	Behan Communications, Inc.
Bruce Bentley	New York State Public Service Commission
Karl Berger	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Marlene Bissell	Resident
Tom Borden.....	Washington County Farm Bureau
Bill Bradley	Water Commissioner, Town of Waterford (Waterford Water Works)
Willard Bruce	Commissioner, Department of General Services, City of Albany
Doug Bullock	Albany Central Federation of Labor
Nick Caimano	Office of Representative John Sweeney
Bruce Carpenter	New York Rivers United
David Carpenter	State University of New York at Albany-School of Public Health
Thomas Catallo	Resident
Scott Chase	Hyde Park-Dutchess County Water Authority
Sarah Chasis	Natural Resources Defense Council
Nevin Cohen	Riverfront Property Owner
John Conley	Adirondack Hydro
Laura Connors	Resident
Dave Conover	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Jim Conroy	Deputy Mayor, Troy
William B. Cook	Saratoga County Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Keith Corneau.....	Adirondack Hydrodevelopment Corporation
Erin Crotty.....	Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
William Daigle	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
John Davis	NYSDOL-EPB
Ken DeCerce.....	Supervisor, Town of Halfmoon
Katie DeGroot.....	Citizen Liaison Committee
John Dergosits	New York State Canal Corporation



Name	Affiliation
Charles Diamond	Office of Representative Michael McNulty
Kathleen Donnelly	Society of St. Ursula
Bill DuBois	Village of Rhinebeck Water Department
Ken Dufty	Resident
Michael Elder	General Electric-Counsel/Northeast/Midwest Region
Robert Elliott	Mayor, Croton-on-Hudson
Judith Enck	NYS Attorney Generals Office Environmental Protection Bureau
Larry Ennist.....	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Andy Esperti	Democratic Chairman, Washington County
Kevin Farrar	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Carolyn Frank	Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Richard Fuller	Hudson River CARE
Joanne Fuller	Hudson River CARE
Joe Gardner	Appalachian Mountain Club
Terry Gould	Resident
Manna Jo Greene	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Tom Grover	Resident
Harry Guthiel	Supervisor, Town of Moreau
John Haggard.....	General Electric-Manager, Hudson River Program
Laura Haight.....	New York Public Interest Research Group, Environmental Club
Robert Hall	Chairman Saratoga County Board of Supervisors
Charles Hanehan	Farmer, FAIR
Lori Harris.....	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Development and Planning
Tim Havens.....	CEASE
Jane Havens.....	CEASE
David Higby	Environmental Advocates
George Hodgson.....	Saratoga County Environmental Management Council
Mara Holcomb	Resident
Chelsea Horn	Resident
Katherine Hudson.....	New York State Attorney General's Office
Denis Hughes	New York AFL-CIO
Jerry Jennings	Mayor, Albany
Jeff Jones	Environmental Advocates
Frank Keane	Albany Port District Commission
Mike Keenan	Troy Labor Council
Kit Kennedy	Natural Resources Defense Council
Edgar King	Resident
Michael Komoroske	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



Name**Affiliation**

Alvin Konigsberg	State University of New York at New Paltz
Thomas Kryzak	Resident
James Kudlack	Resident
Colette LaFuente	Mayor, Poughkeepsie
Michael LaPan	Hudson River CARE
John Lawler	Supervisor, Town of Waterford
Candace Lider.....	Troy Labor Council
Paul Lilac	Supervisor, Town of Stillwater
Janet MacGillivray.....	Riverkeeper
Ken Mackintosh	Office of Senator Hillary Clinton
John Maddisson.....	Resident
Florence Mattison.....	Resident
Martin G. Mahar	Rensselaer County, Legislator Majority Office
Aaron Mair	Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corp.
Stephen Mann	Office of Senator Charles Schumer
Michael Manning.....	Office of Representative Nita Lowey
James Marquette.....	City Administrator, City of Poughkeepsie
Alex Mathiesson	Riverkeeper
David Mathis	Hudson River CARE
Rich Mayfield	Office of Representative Benjamin Gilman
Kitty McCollough	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Paul McDowell.....	NY State Farm Bureau
Jean McGrane	Friends of a Clean Hudson
Andy Mele	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
John Mylod	Resident
Jerry Nappi.....	Office of Representative Sue Kelly
Phyllis Newham	Beacon Sloop Club
Kathy Parrent	Natural Resources Defense Council
Mark Pattison.....	Mayor, Troy
Bill Peck	Farmer, FAIR
Lisa Pelstring	NOAA
Baret Pinyoun	Sierra Club
William Ports	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
George Putnam.....	Resident
Loni Rafferty	New York State Department of Health
David Rahni	Pace University
Stephen Ramsey	Vice President, General Electric
Ira Rubenstein	Resident



Name	Affiliation
Edward Ryan	Mayor, Fort Edward
John Santacrose	Resident
Judy Schmidt-Dean	CEASE
Mary Schoolfield	Resident
Terry Seeley	Hudson River CARE
Christopher Sgambati	Supervisor, Town of Mechanicville
Bill Sheehan	Hackensack Riverkeeper
Peter Sheehan	Sierra Club
John Sherman	Mayor, Village of Schuylerville
Rich Shiafo	Scenic Hudson
Daniel Smatko	Village of Fort Edward
Dean Sommer	FAIR
Eliot Spitzer	New York State Attorney General's Office
Tim Sweeney	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
David Sweeney	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Susan Taluto	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Paul Terrio	Resident
Jack Tobin	New York State Waterways Association
Ronald Tramontano	New York State Department of Health
June Traver	Resident
Marion Trieste	Trieste & Associates
Joe Vandalou	Resident
Linda Von Der Heide	Rensselaer County Department of Economic Development
Roland Vosburgh	Columbia County Planning Department
Chris White	Office of Representative Maurice Hinchey
Jim Whitney	Resident
Roger Whitney	Attorney, Washington County
Donald Wilbur	Supervisor, Town of Greenwich
Jeff Williams	New York State Farm Bureau
Andy Willner	NY/NJ Baykeeper







APPENDIX C

Sources for More Information about the Public Participation Process

Sources for More Information about the Public Participation Process

- **EPA Website**

www.epa.gov/udson

- **Marasco Newton Group**

www.marasconewton.com/udsonriver
1-800-480-9058

- **E-Mail Project Updates** can be obtained by subscribing to the Hudson River PCB Project List Serve.

- To subscribe, send an e-mail to: epa-udson@valley.rtpnc.epa.gov

- Type **subscribe** in the subject box.

- In the message box type:

subscribe
epa-udson
your first name
your last name

- **Key Contacts**

- David Kluesner, Community Involvement Coordinator, 212-637- 3653, kluesner.dave@epa.gov

- N.G. Kaul, Director of the Hudson River Field Office, 518-747-4389

- Leo Rosales, Hudson River Field Office, 518-747-4389





APPENDIX D

MNG Team Members

MNG Team Members

ADAM DIAMOND

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The Marasco Newton Group, Arlington, Virginia*

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*Senior Facilitator/Public Participation Manager
The Perspectives Group, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia*

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The Perspectives Group, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

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*Senior Facilitator
Consensus Systems, Leesburg, Virginia*

PATRICK TALLARICO

*Senior Facilitator
Marasco Newton Group, Arlington, Virginia*





APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Tell me how you have been involved in this issue in the past (meetings attended, gave input, belonged to groups)?
2. Tell me about past efforts to involve the public in decisions regarding cleanup of the Hudson.
 - Are there aspects of past public participation that worked well?
 - Are there aspects of past public participation that should be changed in the future?
 - Are there aspects of past public participation that should not be repeated?
3. Are you familiar with the peer review process used to critique technical information during the development of the Record of Decision?
 - What were the strengths of that process?
 - What were its weaknesses?
4. In the past, how have you received information about Hudson River cleanup issues?
 - What sources were most accurate?
 - Are there examples of information sources that were poor (over-simplified, too technical, too difficult to access)?
 - Have you used the Internet to get information about dredging?
5. Do you have all the information you need to fully understand the dredging project?
6. What do you know about the document EPA produced to explain their decision to dredge the Hudson (Record of Decision)?
 - Have you seen a copy of this document?
 - How did you learn about what is in this document?
7. What would be most helpful for you to understand regarding the dredging project?
8. How do you typically get information about your community?
9. How do you typically get information about issues related to the Hudson River?
10. Do you have any suggestions for how the EPA can be sure people are getting the information they need regarding this project?
11. Does your community or interest need technical assistance in order to fully participate in this project?
 - What types of technical assistance would be most beneficial?
 - Does this technical expertise exist in your community?
 - Are there resources or funding available to acquire that technical assistance?
12. What impacts do you believe the dredging project will have on the area (environmental, economic, quality of life)?
 - Will the project have benefits? What are they? Who will benefit?
 - Will the project have negative impacts? What are they? Who will bear those impacts?



13. What aspects of the dredging project do you believe will have the greatest impact on you personally?

- Tell me more about how _____ will impact you?
- On what aspects of _____ would you like to have input?

14. How should the public be involved in upcoming decisions for how to implement the dredging project?

15. What points of view should be represented in decision making for the dredging project?

16. In your community, are there any obstacles to successful public participation (skills or knowledge of residents, availability of expertise, availability of technology, Internet access, schedule conflicts, transportation)?

17. Do you have any concerns/reservations about involvement of the community in this project?

18. To you, what is the key to successful involvement of the public in this project?

19. For which dredging issues is public participation most important?

20. Often, public participation programs help to build trust among stakeholders. Do you have any suggestions for how EPA can help build trust with people interested in the Hudson River?

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding public participation for this project?

22. Are there any other individuals or groups with whom we should meet regarding public participation in the Hudson River dredging project (cross-check with contact list)?

23. As I mentioned at the beginning of this interview, we will be further discussing public participation. In facilitated meetings with a representative group of stakeholders. Do you have any suggestions for people or interests who should participate in these meetings?

24. Do you have any other questions?

